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INFO OCT-00 AF-10 ADS-00 OCS-06 SS-15 MED-05 L-03
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DRAFTED BY NEA/IAI:ECUBBISON:SNB
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UNCLAS STATE 313290

E.O. 12065:

TAGS: CASC, IS, US, 0001

SUBJECT: WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE ON BLACK HEBREWS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

OFFICE OF SECURITY DATE 8/18/81

REVIEWED BY JLC
RDS for XDAV 2 34980
NOV 2 3 1980

REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS
DECLASSIFICATION RELEASE CENTER

RELEASE DENIED
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

1. (UNCLASSIFIED ENTIRE TEXT)

2. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF ARTICLE APPEARING ON FRONT
PAGE OF WASHINGTON POST, NOVEMBER 24. BEGIN TEXT:

-- ISRAEL'S BLACK HEBREWS.

-- AMERICAN SECT RAISES TROUBLESOME QUESTIONS ON
DETERMINING RIGHT TO SETTLE IN JEWISH STATE.

-- DIMONA, ISRAEL: BEN-AMI CARTER, "DIVINE PRINCE
OF PRINCES" OF THE BLACK HEBREWS, STOOD IN THE
SHADE OF A DATE PALM TREE IN AN OASIS-LIKE PARK
IN THIS REMOTE NEGEV DESERT TOWN, A BEATIFIC SMILE
SPREADING ACROSS HIS FACE AS HE WATCHED TWO DOZEN OF
HIS YOUNG SUBJECTS PERFORM GYMNASTIC EXERCISES WITH
PRACTICED PRECISION.

-- ONE BY ONE, HIS LIEUTENANTS APPROACHED HIM,
BOWING REVERENTLY AS THEY ADDRESS HIM "FATHER,"

AND, OCCASIONALLY, "MASTER." THEY EMBRACED HIM
WARMLY, STEPPING RESPECTFULLY ASIDE AT HIS NOD
OF DISMISSAL.

-- THE CHILDREN, DRAWN FROM THE "KINGD... SCHOOL
OF HOLINESS" AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE TO IMPRESS A
VISITOR, TUMBLED OBEDIENTLY ACROSS THE LAWN,
PERFORMING CARTWHEELS, BACKFLIPS AND HUMAN
PYRAMIDS AS VISUAL PROOF OF THEIR FITNESS.

-- "YOU SEE, THEY HAVE NO SWOLLEN BELLIES AND
BOWED LEGS. DO THEY LOOK TO YOU LIKE THEY
ARE BEATEN AND ABUSED, AND SUFFERING FROM MAL-
NUTRITION AND DISEASE?" CARTER ASKED. "THERE
IS A SHEAR CAMPAIGN, A SYSTEMATIC PROGRAM OF
PROPAGANDA BY RACISTS IN THE UPPER ECHELONS OF
THE ISRAELI SOCIETY," HE ADDED.

-- THE BITTERNESS IN CARTER'S VOICE UNDERLINED
THE INTENSITY OF AN 11-YEAR STRUGGLE BETWEEN
THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL AND THE 1,500 BLACK
AMERICANS BELONGING TO THE CULT OF THE BLACK
HEBREWS, WHO CAME TO ISRAEL AS ILLEGAL IMMI-
GRANTS CONTENDING THAT THEY ARE THE DESCENDANTS
OF ANCIENT TRIBES OF ISRAEL WHO WERE EXILED

TO AFRICA AND SOLD INTO SLAVERY.

-- THE CONFLICT, WHICH HAS SIMMERED BEHIND THE
SCENES FOR MORE THAN A DECADE -- OCCASIONALLY
SURFACING IN THE ISRAELI PRESS TO THE IRRITATION
AND EMBARRASSMENT OF VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS --
TOUCHES THE NERVE ENDS OF THE ISRAELI CONSCIENCE.
IT RAISES FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS ABOUT WHO IS A
JEW AND TO WHOM THE DOORS OF THE JEWISH STATE
SHOULD BE OPENED.

THE DEBATE IS HEATING UP ONCE AGAIN,
PARTLY BECAUSE OF NEW ALLEGATIONS BY BLACK
HEBREW DEFECTORS THAT BEN-AMI CARTER HOLDS SWAY
OVER HIS FOLLOWERS WITH BIZARRE, HESSIANIC
RITUALS THAT RECALL THE PEOPLES TEMPLE CULT IN
JONESTOWN, GUYANA, AND PARTLY BECAUSE OF A
CONTROVERSIAL RECOMMENDATION BY A PARLIAMENTARY
COMMITTEE THAT THE GROUP BE GIVEN LEGAL,
PERMANENT STATUS IN ISRAEL.

-- THE GOVERNMENT HAS REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION, BUT AT THE SAME
TIME IT IS UNWILLING TO EXPEL THE BLACK HEBREWS,
FOR FEAR OF EXPOSING ISRAEL TO CHARGES OF RACISM
AND EXACERBATING TENSIONS BETWEEN BLACKS AND
JEWS IN THE UNITED STATES.

-- THE BLACK HEBREWS, SEEMINGLY AWARE OF THE
GOVERNMENT'S DILEMMA, HAVE BEGUN TO TEMPER
THEIR MILITANTLY ANTI-WHITE AND ANTI-ISRAEL
STANCE, SAYING THEY ARE WILLING TO STOP IN-
CREASING THEIR MEMBERSHIP WITH BLACK AMERICANS
WHO, POSING AS CHRISTIAN PILGRIMS, ENTER ISRAEL
ON TOURIST VISAS AND THEN REMAIN HERE ILLEGALLY.
-- CARTER AND HIS FOLLOWERS HAVE ALSO INTEN-
SIFIED A CAMPAIGN TO IMPROVE THE CULT'S IMAGE,
AN EFFORT THEY CONCEDE IS PARTLY DESIGNED TO
OFFSET EXPECTED DAMAGE FROM THE PUBLICATION
NEXT MONTH OF A BOOK BY A FORMER MEMBER, TOMMY
WHITFIELD, WHICH PURPORTS TO DOCUMENT HIS NINE
YEARS AS A BLACK HEBREW.

-- WHITFIELD SPEAKS OF MYSTERIOUS "DISAPPEAR-
ANCES" OF CULT MEMBERS, MARRIAGES ORDERED BY
CARTER, AND UNNATURAL PUNISHMENTS INFLICTED
ON MEMBERS, INCLUDING BEATINGS, IMPRISONMENT,
THE SHAVING OF HEADS, THE CONFISCATION OF PROPERTY
AND MONEY, AND FORCING OF VIOLATORS TO WANDER IN
THE DESERT FOR 40 DAYS.

-- UNDOCUMENTED AND USUALLY UNATTRIBUTED
ACCOUNTS OF OTHER ALLEGED ABUSES HAVE ALSO
APPEARED IN ISRAELI NEWSPAPERS, INCLUDING
STORIES OF BODIES BEING CARRIED OUT OF THE
CULT'S QUARTERS AT NIGHT AND THREATS OF MASS
SUICIDE.

-- THESE REPORTS ARE VEHEMENTLY DENIED BY
CARTER AND HIS FOLLOWERS, AND ARE DISMISSED AS
UNFOUNDED BY THE INVESTIGATORY COMMITTEE
HEADED BY PARLIAMENTARY MEMBER DAVID GLASS.
ONE OF CARTER'S "PRINCES," GERSHON BEN-ISRAEL,
SAID SOME YOUTHS ARE PUNISHED BY HEAD SHAVING
TO "SHAME" THEM, AND THAT OCCASIONALLY YOUTHS
ARE PUNISHED BY "GOOD OLD-FASHIONED THRASHINGS."

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-- MANY ISRAELI RESIDENTS OF DIMONA, INCLUDING THE MAYOR, JACQUES AMIR, WHILE UNHAPPY ABOUT

SQUALID AND CROWDED LIVING CONDITIONS OF SOME BLACK HEBREWS, ALSO MAINTAIN THAT RUMORS OF THE CULT'S ACTIVITIES ARE GROSSLY EXAGGERATED.

-- SEVERAL INFANTS HAVE DIED, APPARENTLY FROM PROTEIN DEFICIENCY CAUSED BY THE CULT'S ADHERENCE TO A STRICT VEGETARIAN DIET, WHICH PROHIBITS EVEN MILK AND DAIRY PRODUCTS. ALSO, OVERCROWDING IN THE CULT'S QUARTERS HERE -- AND IN SIMILAR COMMUNITIES IN THE NEGEV DESERT TOWNS OF ARAD AND HIZPEH RAMON -- HAVE BEEN SERIOUS, WITH AS MANY AS 20 PEOPLE LIVING IN A ROOM.

-- HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT, IN WHAT CARTER INTERPRETS AS A SIGN OF ACCEPTANCE, HAS GIVEN THE BLACK HEBREWS A SPRAWLING HOUSING COMPLEX THAT ONCE WAS A JEWISH IMMIGRANTS' PROCESSING CENTER. THE 100 APARTMENTS THERE WILL IMPROVE THE GROUP'S LIVING STANDARD, HE SAID.

-- CARTER, 40, A FORMER FOUNDRY WORKER FROM CHICAGO, BEGAN BRINGING HIS FOLLOWERS TO ISRAEL IN AUGUST 1969, AFTER UNSUCCESSFULLY TRYING TO SETTLE IN LIBERIA. HE SAID HE HAD A VISION IN 1966 "TO ESTABLISH THE PROPHETIC KINGDOM OF GOD" IN ISRAEL.

-- THE SOFTNESS OF HIS VOICE AND FEATURES HARDENED AT THE MENTION OF RUMORS THAT THE BLACK HEBREWS HAVE VOWED TO COMMIT MASS SUICIDE IF FORCED TO LEAVE ISRAEL.

-- "A SHEAR CAMPAIGN, SYSTEMATIC PROPAGANDA. BEFORE JONES' OWN, DID ANYBODY SUGGEST HE WOULD DO THIS? WE DON'T HAVE ANY SUICIDAL TENDENCIES. THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO SET US UP," CARTER SAID, HIS VOICE RISING.

-- "THE ANCIENT HEBREWS WERE A BLACK RACE OF PEOPLE, AND THEY SAY I'M RACIST. THERE IS A PARALLEL BETWEEN THE ISRAELIS AND J. EDGAR HOOVER. THE ISRAELIS ARE WAGING A PERSONAL VENDETTA TO DESTROY ME. THIS FEAR OF US IS LIKE THE FEAR OF 2,000 YEARS AGO, WHEN JESUS WAS FEARED BY THE PEOPLE IN AUTHORITY. NO UN-RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT CAN STAND ON THIS LAND," CARTER ADDED.

-- ASKED WHAT HIS PEOPLE WOULD DO IF FORCED TO LEAVE, CARTER REPLIED, "I FEEL IF THEY SEND SOLDIERS AND THE POLICE, THEY COULD PROBABLY SUCCEED IN GETTING TWO-THIRDS OF US OUT. THE OTHER THIRD THEY WOULD HAVE TO KILL."

-- FOR NOW, CARTER AND HIS FOLLOWERS HOPE THE GOVERNMENT WILL CHANGE ITS MIND AND ACCEPT THE GLASS COMMITTEE REPORT, LETTING THEM REMAIN.

-- MEANWHILE, ISRAELI IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES HAVE BEGUN TO TIGHTEN CONTROLS ON BLACKS ENTERING ISRAEL AT BEN-GURION AIRPORT, EVEN TURNING AWAY SOME AMERICAN BLACK PILGRIMS WHO HAVE NO APPARENT CONNECTION WITH THE BLACK HEBREWS.

-- "IT'S A REAL PROBLEM. WE HAVE 150,000 AMERICAN PILGRIMS HERE EACH YEAR, AND WE ESTIMATE AT LEAST 10 PERCENT ARE BLACK. HOW CAN ISRAEL KEEP ALL BLACK AMERICANS OUT?" ASKED A CHRISTIAN CLERGYMAN IN JERUSALEM. END TEXT.

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